THE TRUMPET BLAST.

REV. R. H. WALKER, JR.

THE GREATEST CHURCH CATASTROPHE OF ITS KIND THAT EVER HAPPENED IN AMERICA.

VOLUME II.

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THE TRUMPET BLAST.

BY

ROBERT HENRY WALKER, JR.

An Interview with Witnesses and the National Baptist Convention After More than One Hundred Persons had Died in a Stampede Caused by a False Alarm of Fire During an Evening Session of the National Baptist Convention in Shiloh Baptist Church, Southeast Corner Nineteenth Street and Avenue G, Birmingham, Ala., September 19, 1902.

R. H. WALKER, JR., PUBLISHER,
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Dedicated
to my sister,
MISS ELLA WALKER,
praying that she may grow into
pure womanhood and prove to be a
blessing to people in the service of God.
And also dedicated in interest of the Gospel work
to encourage and aid Rev. T. W. Walker in
his efforts to raise thirteen thousand
dollars to finish paying off the
indebtedness of Shiloh Bap-
tist Church in Birming-
ham, Ala.

ROBERT H. WALKER, Jr.
AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

This book is an eventful production which results from the writer's understanding of the needs of the people under alarming circumstances, which show that more than one hundred human beings—women, men and children—died from being crushed in a crowded church edifice front door and smothered to death on the steps of the edifice whilst attempting to escape on account of mistaking the word "fight" for "fire," thus, being killed as a result of a false alarm of fire.

ROBERT H. WALKER, JR.

PREFACE.

Brethren, Members of the National Baptist Convention of the United States of America, and Fellow Citizens:

In honor to our God in whose all wise Providence we are spared to live for His glory, and to work for His honor through faith in his Son, Jesus Christ; and with respect for the dead who died in the midst of unfortunate circumstances over which no human power had control, a deplorable helplessness and a distressful condition which were imposed upon us by the unavoidable disaster at Shiloh Baptist Church, at Birmingham, Alabama, Friday night, between nine and ten o'clock, September 19, 1902, and for a memorial of that horrible visitation of death just at a time when the Great Baptist Denomination was most favorably represented by the Negro race in its twenty-second annual National Baptist Convention; and for the gratification of the wishes of the people and for satisfaction of public and private opinions which may in time vary in regards to the facts in evidence touching the cause and effect of that memorable catastrophe, I humbly submit this token of my respects to the lamented dead, my regards for the mourning families and sympathizing friends, my esteem for the National Baptist Convention; my love for my fellowman and my adoration for God.

Believing that the kind hand of God will direct the course of our future duties and guide us in the way of all truth, that when we rest from our labors and our work follows us, our deeds may be made manifest in the just made perfect to the glory and honor of Him who gives and takes away, and against whose decree no man can hinder the dust from returning to dust and ashes to ashes.

Yours for Christ and humanity,

ROBERT HENRY WALKER, JR.,

Publisher of "The Trumpet," Washington, D. C., U. S. A.

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THE TRUMPET BLAST.

GRAPHIC DESCRIPTION IN PART.

GLEANED IN A GENERAL REVIEW OF THE SITUATION IN BIRMINGHAM FOLLOWING THE CATASTROPHE.

Fellow-citizens:

Accept of my humble review which comes to your homes in this little book about the terrible catastrophe in which more than one hundred people lost their lives at Shiloh Baptist Church, in the city of Birmingham, Ala., Sept. 19, 1902.

The National Baptist Convention of representative Negro Baptist preachers and delegates from Baptist churches was convening its twenty-second annual assemblage in Shiloh Baptist Church edifice, according to its agreement of 1901 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Prof. Booker T. Washington, founder and President of Tuskegee, Normal and Industrial Institute, of Tuskegee, Alabama, was especially invited to speak, and therefore accepted an appointment to be present to address the Convention on Friday night, September 19.

The engagement was officially announced, and Prof. Booker T. Washington, accordingly, was welcomed to Birmingham and at Shiloh Baptist Church by the Convention, in the midst of the warmest expressions of gratitude and praise.

Thousands of people who, probably, would not have left their homes that night, were out at Shiloh Church. Hundreds to get a glimpse at the great man; hundreds to hear what he had to say; hundreds curiosity seeking, and hundreds drawn by the natural trend of circumstances without any particular motive.

The edifice which has a seating capacity of three thousand, was quite full at least one hour before the orator of the evening arrived.

At the time of the arrival of the speaker, every seat was occupied, and all of the four aisles were almost congested in the rear with eager auditors, who crowded to the inner part of the church,

being themselves urged forward by a greater multitude from the outside, who were anxious to get into the main auditorium.

So intense was the heat which radiated from the congested mass of living human bodies, that many who had worked their way inside the edifice had as easily sought their way out to the street and departed, while many were still trying to get out, and were complaining and begging their way through the squeezing crowd. At the same time thousands pressed forward to see and to hear.

The restlessness of the people in the entrance to the main auditorium and thereabouts, attracted the attention of the moderator on the pulpit who had already respectfully asked for less noise. The pastor, Rev. T. W. Walker, had already requested that no more people would be admitted to the edifice as a precaution against unavoidable damage which might result from an overcrowded house.

In order to guard against all possible danger, police officers were stationed at the front door and in the gallery.

Ushers were helpless and soon found that even officers of the law were not equal to the emergency.

The great massive gathering honored the speaker with all possible tokens of respect, and manifested much evidence of pleasure and satisfaction at hearing him; but soon as he concluded, the standing throng at once began to seek its way out of the edifice; hence the gradual move of a great part of the congregation towards the front door, met by a strong force of a dissatisfied multitude still trying to get into the main auditorium, gave rise to many entreaties by hundreds who were being mashed and who were fainting from suffocation in the vestibule and on the upper steps which led from the portico on top of the ground steps, which were sixteen feet wide, and thirteen steps high to the outer entrance to the vestibule.

The staircase leading to the gallery was also congested as a result of the congestion of the main entrance.

Whilst this condition seemed but momentary, as the work of alleviating the suffering was in rapid progress by successful repelling the outside force by means of warnings, entreaties, and voluntary announcements of the concluded address, a delegate, a lawyer from Baltimore, Md., pleased with having heard the honorable orator, rose from his chair a step behind the orator, and stepped forward to congratulate him.

At the same time a lady member of the choir to which the chair belonged occupied the delegate's seat. Not knowing that he had been deprived of his seat, the delegate from Baltimore stepped back to be seated, but to his surprise was met by unpleasant remarks from a male member of the choir.

Before any degree of understanding could be reached, harsh words had developed to a resentful attitude. Vindictiveness

prevailed, and with excitement drew alarming cries from female eye-witnesses, who exclaimed the word "fight" with warning alarm. The sounds of the words were heard all over the audience, but were misunderstood and thought to be the word "fire."

Nervous people at once caught up the word "fire" and resounded it vehemently until, wild with excitement and crazed with nervousness, many were silenced in the midst of a rushing stampede.

The Moderator of the Convention entreated that there was no fire! The choir, cool and unassuming, began to sing.

The pastor, Rev. T. W. Walker, urged that there was no fire; that all were asked to keep quiet.

The stampede rose to a higher degree of pandemonium, the people who had been started out by the alarm thought each entreaty was a warning to them to flee for their lives. They mistook the word "quiet" for "fire," and "there is no fire" for "there is fire." Ushers jumped upon top of benches and yelled, "There is no fire, be seated," but they were not heeded to, and they themselves were caught in the raging tumult, some escaping with injury, while others of them were killed.

EXTRACTS FROM BOOKER T. WASHINGTON'S ADDRESS, DELIVERED TO THE BAPTIST ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION AT SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH.

BIRMINGHAM, ALA., FRIDAY NIGHT, SEPTEMBER 19, 1902.

I am glad to have a part in welcoming this large and influential gathering to Alabama. I wish every citizen of the South could come into contact with you and learn something of the tremendous progress being made by our people. From your Statistical Secretary, Dr. S. W. Bacote, I have secured the following figures, which indicate something of the progress of the Negro Baptists of America, and these figures are to a large extent indicative of the progress of the whole race. I find that two million Negro Baptists are represented by this organization; that you have 15,850 ministers, 16,000 churches, 543,000 children in Sunday schools; 40,900 Sunday school teachers, 515 associations, 10,208 church houses valued at $11,060,000; that your members own personal property valued at $10,000,000, and that last year you raised for all purposes in your churches, $2,129,000. This is a very flattering record.

DON'T MOVE ABOUT.

The sooner we can grow to the point where all races in all sections of the country will recognize and agree to the fact that the Negro is a permanent part of American citizenship; that he does not mean to move away to any foreign land, but expects to remain here, and by patient toil and sacrifice, if need be, make himself in mind, in skill, in morality and religion a permanent and useful part of the community in which he lives, the sooner this is recognized, the better it will be for all parties concerned. Nothing will be permanently gained for either race by the one throwing stones at the other or by doing that which will engender strife, and create and keep alive suspicion. If we could prove as a race that every white man in the South is dishonest and vicious, it would not raise the Negro one iota. If the white man could prove that every Negro in the South is untrustworthy and without virtue, it would not help the white man one iota. No individ-

ual ever lifted himself by seeking to drag down another. No race ever lifted itself up by practicing or by learning to hate, or attempting to degrade another race. I want to reach and encourage my people to learn to practice the lesson of love and not the lesson of hatred and strife. The strong, useful individuals of earth are those who have learned to live high up in the atmosphere of kindness and truth, unselfishness and self-forgetfulness.

QUESTION OF EDUCATION.

As a race, within the last forty years we have given a great deal of attention to education. We are grateful to the South, and grateful to the North, for the assistance we have received in this regard. We should bear in mind, however, that mere education without application to the practical things of life that are about our door means very little. When I speak of Industrial Education, I always mean not only the putting of knowledge into the head, but teaching the idividual through the use of the hand to put that knowledge into doing the things that the community wants done where he lives.

At the present time in the South, as a race, we are in the midst of great industrial development, a development that touches earth, and wood and mineral. Our services are in demand on every hand as never before. In the midst of industrial activity we have an opportunity to plant ourselves as useful citizens in a way that very seldom comes to a race.

Let us not overlook or lose this opportunity. Our brethren in the republic of Hayti have made a serious mistake in not educating their children to take part in the agricultural and mineral development of their country. Let us learn a lesson by reason of what they have failed to accomplish. We have sometimes heard it said that the Negroes at the Tuskegee Institute are being worked. Far from that! There is a vast difference between one's being worked and working.

Being worked signifies degradation; working, civilization. As a race, more and more in every part of this country, we want to learn to work and not to be worked. We want to teach our children the dignity and beauty that there is in every form of honest toil, and the disgrace there is in every form of idleness.

AGRICULTURAL LIFE.

I want to see more of our educated youth graduate from the college and return to the farm, and put brains, dignity and skill of the highest order into agricultural life. I want to see a large number of them, for an example, starting truck gardens. I want to see them beginning to raise poultry in a skillful and intelligent manner. While race lines may be drawn in other respects, you

will find when the Negro proves that when he can produce finer poultry products than the white man produces, the Negro will receive the orders for the poultry every time. Wherever the Negro can prove himself of more value to the community, more industrious and useful than any other man, he will receive encouragement and support.

I do not believe that any one knows of any instance in the South where a black man has been refused a loan of money at the bank simply because of his color.

We need not despair. We must not despair. It is true we do not cast so many political ballots as formerly, but we have the chance to cast a green ballot at the bank cashier's window six days in the week, and more and more are we doing this. We do not have so many representatives in state Legislatures, but we have more men owning property, homes and farms; we have not so many men in Congress, but more owning stores and other business enterprises; not any Negro governors, but we have more banks operated by Negroes than ever before in our history.

This Convention I know is composed very largely of ministers whose high moral Christian character will compare favorably with an equal number of men of any race, but I cannot end with this statement. I would not be performing my duty and would not be speaking frankly to you unless I stated in the most emphatic, but, at the same time, in the most kindly manner, that there are few people in our race who have such opportunities to lift our people or to drag them down as is true of the Negro minister. In too large a degree the profession has been lowered and degraded by reason of the fact that it has been too easy for ignorant and, in many cases, I am sorry to say, for vicious men to enter the ministry, and after they have entered they have remained in the profession too long without being turned out. We can never have a race that will be respected and honored until the ministry is purified and lifted up. There should be a line kept drawn between the virtuous and the vicious, between the good and the evil, between those that would build up and those that would tear down. I am glad to note signs throughout this country that indicate that more and more the rank and file of the people are determined to employ no man as a minister who is not pure in his earthly life.

OTHER WORK TO DO.

The people are demanding that the minister do more than preach to them sermons upon ancient history or ancient Bible illustrations. The average man, I believe, cares very little about whether Jonah was swallowed by the whale or not, but he does take interest in having his minister preach at least once in a while, the industrial, educational and moral advantages that relate to his

own community. The minister who can teach his people about how to make money as well as how to give money will usually have his church crowded.

Do not get the idea from what I have stated that I am not conscious of the immense progress that the race has made and is making. No race similarly surrounded in all history has made progress equal to ours. I also remember that no race can ever be lifted up by merely calling attention to the weak points in that race. The Negro, like other races, must be judged by the best and not by the worst.

TEACH THEM TRADES.

One other thing: As you go to your homes, I trust that you will use every iota of your influence to get our young people to learn trades, to cease idling on the corners of streets.

I hope you will teach the parents that mere book education without education of the hand is likely to increase an individual's want without giving him the ability to supply these increased wants. No young man or woman is safe until he or she has learned a trade in addition to getting a moral and mental education; until he or she has learned the saving habit; has learned that if one receiving $4.00 a week should make a supreme effort to put at least $1.00 of that amount in the bank.

Finally, let us not grow discouraged or despondent. It is true that we live in an eventful age, when many things are occurring which are hard to understand or appreciate; but let us remember that in the really primary, fundamental things of life no one can hinder or stay our progress. After all, when we analyze life, we find that property, employment, education, high moral Christian character are the indispensable elements.

In the last analysis these are the qualities which create influence and give the race standing before the world. So long as the Negro is not debarred from securing these, let us never bow our heads in discouragement. The race may be hindered and delayed in its progress, but if it has high ideals it can never be defeated.

IGNORANCE BREEDS IGNORANCE.

The people of this country, North and South, are beginning more and more to realize that every lazy man in a community breeds more laziness; every vicious man in a community breeds more viciousness; every intelligent man in a community, whatever his color or race, adds to the intelligence of the community; every wealthy man in the community adds to the wealth of the community; every skillful man adds to the comfort of the community.

I believe that the time has come when right about us here in the South there is going to be a growing class of Southern white people who are going to feel that they have no higher duty to help lift up any race than falls to them in the assistance of the Negro who is at their door.

This is not the time for doubt or discouragement. Let us resolve to go forward with a firmer step and with a more determined heart. Forward until there can be no question about our ability and success as a race.

MR. JOHN H. BUNN,
USHER AT SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH, BIRMINGHAM, ALA.

LETTER FROM MR. BUNN, AN USHER.

Birmingham, Ala., Oct. 8, 1902.

Rev. R. H. Walker, Jr.:

Dear Sir:—I regret that owing to a rushing business I have not had time until now to write an account of the catastrophe which occurred at Rev. T. W. Walker's church on the 19th ult. During the time of the Convention, I served on the Reception Committee, and on that eventful night was stationed near the front door, serving as usher in the rear of the church. Even from the bottom of the steps people were packed like sardines and there was no use of telling them from the outside to stop crowding in upon those who were already inside. I had just made my way back in to the church from the rear, where I had been trying to persuade the people to be quiet and stop pushing, but the wizard of Tuskegee was on the rostrum, and with his tongue was delivering such a great speech of eloquence to his people, telling them how to improve their conditions, that his words penetrated out through the open doors into the hearts of the people until they had already begun to draw themselves above the shoulders of friends; and with their eyes were peering as if to get the last glance at some heavenly angel. It was only a few minutes after Mr. Washington had finished his speech, when one, Mr. Will Hicks, of Birmingham, and Lawyer Ballou, of Baltimore, Md., had a dispute over a chair and acted as though they would fight. These men were on the rostrum. A lady who was sitting near them in the choir stand became frightened and repeated the words "fight!" "fight!" and at the same time President Morris turned and said, "Quiet! quiet!" Everybody in the rear of the church took those words for "fire!" "fire!" and then came on the mad rush for the door. Another usher was standing in the aisle near me, and I called him to tell those people on the left side of the church that it was not fire, but only two men fighting. I did not have time to notice him or that side of the house again until after everything was over.

The stampede was on. As soon as possible I pushed my way out into the lobby of the church and standing myself upon a table, screamed until I was pushed off by the wild rush which was being made for the door telling them there was no fire in the church; but when the rush was well on, the dust began to fly and a great many of them mistook it for smoke, and nothing would make them believe otherwise—they were frightened to death. Men

rushed over women and children, knocking and pushing with all the strength they had. They began to repeat the words, "fire!" "fire!" and, of course, when a man begins to halloo and becomes frightened out of his wits, it is natural for a woman or child to faint. I saw men, women and children climbing over the heads of those who had first gained the door, and whenever they would get to an opening in the crowd, they would fall through to the floor to be trodden upon never to rise again.

One of the most appalling scenes that met my gaze was a little girl, who in that terrible stampede began screaming: Murder! murder! I looked and saw her. She was being squeezed to death, I thought; once more I plunged into the crowd but failed to get her all the way out; myself being pushed and mashed, I had to turn away. My last glance saw her still in the crowd, wedged as tight as wax. I thought she was killed, but two days later a lady stopped me on the street, addressed me by my name and said: "Mr. Bunn, you saved my daughter!" Yes! I smiled, because I was glad to know that I had been the means of saving one person. The death list could have been much longer, but I believe the hand of God was in that house, and those who fell to rise no more had been marked by him for an early grave. When I saw that I could not do any more, and the doors were packed by people who were trying to get into the church to see what the excitement was, thereby completely blocking the entrance, and causing many poor souls to fall into eternity from being squeezed to death. I made my way back under the stairs and found an opening through which I could go out through the basement of the church. When I had reached the outside, I paused; in front of me, behind me, on the right and on the left were dead bodies. News had gone everywhere; it seemed that the church had fallen in and killed most everybody. Those who had relations there had come to find out about them, and some of them did find out about them—cold in death. Curiosity seekers were there to see the death trap, where so many of their friends had met death. The groans of those few who lingered in pain were terrible and the cries of the bereaved relatives made it almost unbearable.

After I had been on the outside a few minutes and the steps had been cleared of the dead, I went back into the church and found the usher whom I had spoken to when the rush began, cold in death. This itself chilled me to think that one who had tried to save others was killed himself. Ambulances were busy carrying off the dead. Notwithstanding that there were at least one half dozen of those vehicles on the scene they could hardly cope with the emergency. After re-entering the church, I found bodies of the victims lying all over the church on benches; it was a ghostly sight, though I am sure that the song which was begun by Mr. Washington was the means of saving many. It was those

who had come too late to get a seat that were in the rear of the church who met death. The noise that was made by them in the rush for the door, drowned the song that was being sung and they failed to hear and therefore went headlong to death. For the next five days there was no talk but of the catastrophe and the dull tread of the funeral hearses cast a gloom over the city such as has never been before in the history of Birmingham.

Yours very respectfully,

JOHN H. BUNN.

MISS ORA BELL NOLUMS TELLS WHAT SHE SAW.

We started to hear Prof. Washington, but we were met by Revs. T. S. Jordan and Allen, who told us we could not get in. We took them at their word and went back home.

I was at home when I first heard of the Shiloh Baptist Church disaster. All of us at home became alarmed, because we heard that the church was on fire and that the people were being burned up. A few delegates were at our house and went with us to the church in a hurry. When we arrived, only two dead people were outside. They were the bodies of women lying on a table by the side of the church. There was no fire about the church except that in a cooking stove down stairs used to accommodate with warm lunches. In about three or four minutes a group of men began to bring out dead bodies of women and men and lay them on the ground about the edifice and in Mr. Reid's Florist Garden by the side of the edifice.

The sight was terrible. I was very anxious to know if any of our relatives or friends were among the dead or injured. I watched every one that was brought out. The dead died in all kinds of shapes. Some with necks broken and nearly everything else one could imagine. One man's fist was jammed down in his own throat up to his waist and his mouth was bleeding. A wounded man was laid on the ground, but in a few minutes he groaned and jumped up and ran around like a wild man. He soon became so weak that he laid down again, saying, with a painful groan, "Have mercy, God, God; God have mercy!" He wreaked awhile and jumped up again, but he fell off about six feet and swore terribly, using very bad language as his eyes blared and his body seemed to jerk like he had the hysterics. He groaned and died.

Bird's-eye View of The City of Birmingham, Alabama.

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM.

Looking from southwest to the city from the top of Red Mountain, a lofty eminence towering over the city at the south boundary commonly known as Bird's-eye View. The shady part of the foreground of the scene showing great space between houses and beautiful landscape lawns is the side or northern slope of Red Mountain, which has its basis in Jones' Valley where the city lies in the more densed vale below. The smoke which hovers over the city in the distance, permitting only now and then a slight view at small groups of clouds which jointly cluster between the mountains and form a dimness that presents a dull appearance of the scene in the distance, is characteristic of the condition of the air above as the result of a trade which makes the city of Birmingham an industrial center of Southern products in coal and iron.

The horizon in the far distance shows the top of a chain of Appalachian family mountains on the eastern and Northern boundary of the city. The lines leading to a massive building situated in a northerly direction in the scene are indications pointing to Shiloh Baptist Church, where the terrible disaster occurred Friday night, September 19, 1902.

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA.

THIS IS A CORRECT PICTURE OF THE FAMOUS EDIFICE AS IT NOW APPEARS.

SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH.

Rev. T. W. Walker, pastor. Messrs. Swann & Sons, contractors and builders, 19th Street and Avenue H, Birmingham, Ala.

The writer of this book, Rev. R. H. Walker, Jr., had a lengthy interview with Mr. Swann & Sons, contractors and builders of the Shiloh Baptist Church of Birmingham, Ala. The interview revealed the following facts touching the much talked of building, which is well represented in this picture. Mr. D. A. Helmich, one of the world's most successful architects, was architect for Shiloh Baptist Church edifice. Mr. Hemlich has a record in Birmingham alone which is sufficient to guarantee to the world his unquestionable ability and his mathematical accuracy in architectural skill of old standing. In Birmingham he is considered to be the leading draughtsman in all heavy structures. The City Hall, at a cost of ($200,000) two hundred thousand dollars; the Miller & Ketic Building; the Metropolitan Hotel, and other large buildings well known to the business world for their massive structure in Birmingham are products of his architectural ingenuity. The foundation is (5) five feet below the top soil, and is calculated to stand without repairs or condemnation more than fifty years.

The building is one hundred (100) feet long and seventy (70) feet wide.

The side walls are twenty-four (24) feet high and have the thickness required by law.

The whole structure is made of the best material obtainable, having overhead eight (8) tresses weighing one ton each. Enough wood material makes up the building to build fifty houses of five comfortable rooms each. The seating capacity is 3,000 comfortable seats. The cost of the building alone was forty-five thousand ($45,000) dollars. The cost of seats alone was two thousand one hundred ($2,100) dollars.

There are eight hundred lights in the building, including electric lights and gas jets.

The building has six exits, through which 3,000 people may pass in regular church order in less than one hour.

Messrs. Swann & Son, the contractors and builders, were one year building the edifice, completing it in 1901. Birmingham City Building Inspector, Mr. Anan, announced that the edifice was one of the neatest and most substantial buildings in Birmingham. Mr. Swann says he was attending the National Baptist Convention day and night, and was occupying a seat in about middle

of one of the galleries when the stampede reigned. He was cool, however, and saw no cause for alarm.

The building had been packed with people several sessions. At no time did he notice any indication of strain on the building or any part of it.

Investigation showed that the stampede had no effect on the building at all, not even a scratch of damage, except one of the interior light flop doors was torn from its hingers by a man who was crazy with excitement.

The Negro Race, especially Baptists, may justly be proud of Shiloh Baptist Church edifice, its congregation and pastor, whose indefatigable exertions, with Christian courage, bring honor and credit to our race and country, and give encouragement to others who are engaged in the work of the Gospel Church. We may also feel grateful to God for such men of the Negro Race as Mr. Swann & Son, contractors and builders, Virginians by birth.

It was in the main entrance front door, between the brick walls above the outside steps, where the people were smothered and mashed to death. There they were so tightly wedged in a pile of fallen mass of humanity until they could not be pulled out from the outside. They were piled upon each other more than eight feet deep, extending above the upper layer of white stone walls which forms the basis of the upper side windows and the middle front windows.

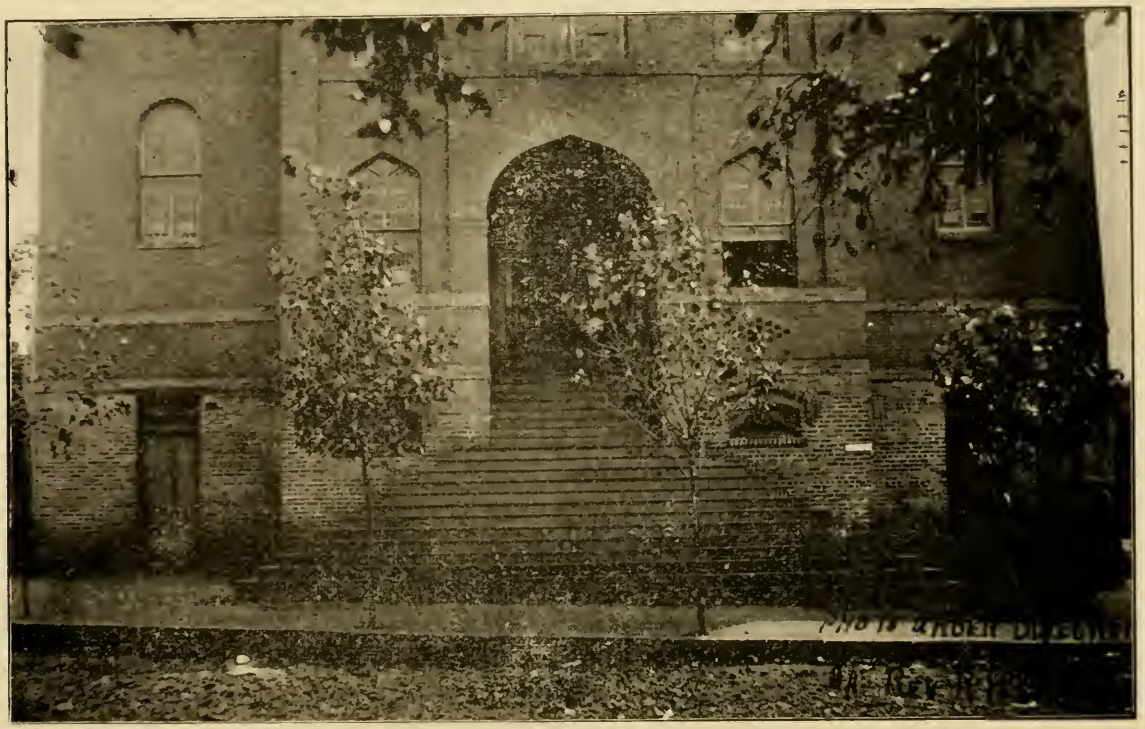
The building is situated on the southeast corner of G and 19th Streets. Nineteenth Street runs north through the business part of the city to the northern limits over the mountainous boundary, and south up the northern slope of Red Mountain.

G Street, on which the building fronts, runs east and west.

The four little trees were set out in their present positions about one year ago. The smooth surface at the bottom of the ground steps is the earth sidewalk of G Street, running east and west by the door. The rough surface bordering the sidewalk is G. Street drive in part, in front of the church.

The two front doors, one on each side of the steps, are main entrances to the vestry of the church, which was used as a reception room during the Convention, and in which the church holds its prayer and business meetings, but which was used as a temporary morgue the night of the stampede. The light colored brick forming the lower part of the building are brick which were made at Rev. T. W. Walker's brickyard, the pastor having a brickyard of his own.

Looking to your right at the corner of the building, the white smooth looking, square cut object in the wall is the cornerstone. The white strip between the vestry door and ground steps is a signal board showing the name of the street on which the edifice fronts. The window between the signal board and the steps as



External front view of the main entrance of Shiloh Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama, as it looks when we stand across the street in front of the front door.

the window on the other side of the steps, is a transom-light and a supplementary air supply to the vestry. The two layers between the brick of the wall are brick braces which add to the strength of the building. The window to the right, which is hoisted, is the one a man jumped through and broke his neck on the steps during the excitement. The objects which appear to be branches of trees shading the upper part of the wall are limbs of trees which stand across the street in front of the building, which were taken in the picture, because the photographer could not get a good view of the building without taking other objects within the radiance of the focus of the apparatus.

The top windows are lights to the gallery. The two windows over each of the vestry doors are lights to the staircases of the gallery. The two windows, one on each side of the great door of main entrance and over each of the transoms are lights to the lobby of the edifice and to the inside staircases which lead from the lobby to the vestry below.

There are twenty-six steps from the ground to the vestibule at the door to the auditorium; thirteen from the ground to the top of the outside steps, and thirteen from the top of the outside steps to the vestibule; the top of the outside steps is twelve feet square. The inside steps leading to the vestibule from the top of the outside steps are ten feet wide. From corner to corner, as seen in this view of the building is seventy feet.

It was on the inside steps which extend from the vestibule to the top of the outside steps, where the people were mashed and smothered to death the night of the stampede. The door of the main auditorium was congested by the pressing stream of people coming down each staircase from the gallery, and by a tremendous force of people pressing from the outside, who were trying to get in. Hence, the people coming from the main auditorium and gallery inside and the multitude coming from the street met on the upper steps and at the door of the auditorium.

The cries of the people who were being mashed, drew the outside force with curiosity as well as with anxiety. Hence, the press became greater as excitement grew more alarming.

It was said by eye-witnesses that the press on the upper steps about the vestibule was so great that women and men were mashed to death standing straight up. Some scrambled to the shoulders and heads of the people and walked and crawled out of the press and escaped.

When the cry of fire was made inside an exciting rush was made against the outside force, thus completely congesting the the main entrance from the front door of the auditorium to the top of the outside steps. Like in all our controversies the strong rules the weak; so in the stampede the stronger force from the inside under the influence of excitement rushed over the outside

force which was rendered weaker and weaker, as those outside relaxed on hearing the alarm of fire coming from the inside. The sudden rush against the outside force caused those that were on the steps to fall. Those that fell on the outside steps, having access to the open air, and not being confined by walls, recovered and regained their standing position and escaped alive. Those that fell on the upper steps, being already almost exhausted with suffocation and wedged between the brick walls, could not release themselves without help. Some were dead when they fell; others died at once, being unable to get any air on account of others falling on top of them, and still others on top, and still others falling, forming layer after layer of fallen people who formed a horrible pile of smothered humanity.

Those that recovered on the outside set to work rescuing the terribly unfortunate ones, but the increased flow of falling and dying necessitated the call of the fire department and the police department, which responded by companies in quick succession, taking immediate charge of a regularly organized rescuing expedition with ample medical aid. Excited people were still coming out of the front way over the dead and fallen mass of humanity. Strenuous efforts were put forth to force the congregation to go out of the edifice by the vestry doors, which was only accomplished after the pile in the main entrance was more than eight feet deep. The pile was so tightly wedged in beneath the brick walls until they could not be pulled out from the outside without pulling their limbs off. Some who had fallen in the bottom layer had only the lower part of their bodies caught. Although their heads and upper part of their bodies were out of the pile, they could not be pulled out of the mortal press. They called for water and air which was administered as freely as possible. Sympathizers sat down by them and held their heads in their laps and breathed out words of hope to them, while the company of rescuing angels of mercy composed of the police and fire departments, hospital crews, volunteers from the streets, the ministers and women delegates, friends, relatives and doctors of medicine were hastily, but carefully, removing the pile one by one, beginning at the top of the pile inside the edifice, and laying those which were pronounced dead on the ground in a vacant lot by the side of the building for identification, and using every means of resuscitation to restore and help those that were pronounced still alive. Eighty-six were pronounced dead, as the doctors examined them when they were taken out of the pile. Eighteen who were either dying with necks broken or internal injury and were pronounced alive, died under medical treatment and most sympathizing care. Thus one hundred and four who were taken out of the pile died on the night of the catastrophe. Hundreds received bodily injuries whose names were not included in the official report. From one to four weeks later, the

death list swelled until it was reported, says Dr. Johnson, that one hundred and twenty have died from direct causes, as a result of the disaster.

Interior view, looking from the front door to the pulpit and choir stand of Shiloh Baptist Church, southeast corner of 19th Street and Avenue G, Birmingham, Ala., where Prof. Booker T. Washington delivered his popular address to the National Baptist Convention, Friday evening, September 19, 1902, followed by the loss of 120 lives of his auditors.

Interior view of Shiloh Baptist Church, Rev. T. W. Walker, Pastor, southeast corner 19th Street and Avenue G, Birmingham, Ala., looking from the pulpit to the front door. The desk on the pulpit shows where Prof. B. T. Washington stood when he delivered his popular address to the National Baptist Convention, September 19, 1902.

The outside thirteen steps of Shiloh Baptist Church, showing the portico where the heads of the first layer of the fallen stuck out of the pile in the door, and a scene looking across the steps to the old building of Shiloh Baptist Church, which is now used as a boarding house.

National Baptist Convention, Rev. E. C. Morris, Pres. Picture Made 6 Hours Before the Disaster Ocurred.

Woman's Auxiliary to the National Baptist Convention, Mrs. Layten, Pres. Taken at Front Door of Rev. Wilhite's Church, Birmingham, Alabama, Thursday, Sept. 17, 1902.

WOMANS AUXILIARY TO THE
NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION.
BIRMINGHAM, ALA., SEPT. 17th to 22, 1902.
PHOTO BY
BYRD-McCAW.
3172 N. 20th ST.
Garrett Walker Jr.
Mission.

MR. SWANN.

CONTRACTOR AND BUILDER OF SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH EDIFICE,
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA.

REV. T. W. WALKER,

PASTOR SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH, BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA.

STATEMENT OF REV. T. W. WALKER.

The most awful thing that ever happened in Birmingham's history occurred on the night of September 19, 1902, during the Convention that was being held here at Shiloh Baptist Church, and in memory of that sad and never-to-be-forgotten night, here are a few verses that will serve as a memento for generations to come:

"An awful thing has happened!"
Is what everybody said,
When on that sad, fatal night
It was very, very bad.

The Convention was on hand
And everything seemed so bright;
For every one was happy—
Full of God's eternal light.

The speaking it was going on,
The singing was at its best;
All at once a cry was heard,
"Be quiet!" "Be quiet now and rest!"

"Be quiet!" was the fatal word
That caused the angry stampede;
People thought the man said "Fire!"
And would not hear or take heed.

The pastor did his very best
To stop the wild, maddened throng;
His words were unavailing
But that didn't last very long.

They were out in one mad spell
So many people were there;
They seemed that they were frantic
And were running everywhere.

Down the corridor they went
And fell upon each other,
Oh, an awful sight was seen;
It was plain they would smother.

A hundred or more were killed
There on that sad, fatal night,
Where all things were so pleasant
And once seemed to be so bright.

Delegates from everywhere
And visitors by the scores;
The church was full on each side
Until it could hold no more.

People came in such a rush
To gain sure admittance there,
But in that new handsome church
No space was found anywhere.

Booker Washington was there
With all his might and power,
And held the congregation down
For fully quite an hour.

When his address was ended
Many started then to go,
Everybody seemed to be
Headed for the main front door.

They rushed pell-mell on every side,
And they knocked each other down;
The pastor did his very best
To quiet all things around.

No matter what the warning
They appeared to heed it not,
Dozens on that awful night
Died right there on the spot.

Out upon the corridor,
Where so many people lay,
They died upon each other,
But I guess it was God's way,

For His ways are mysterious;
We do not know what to say
When He comes with all His power
And carries all things His way.

The ambulance came on time
To bear the dead away,
They were busy all that night
And far up in the next day.

The night of the 19th of September, 1902, was a night long to be remembered with the Shiloh Baptist Church. While the Convention was in session, Booker T. Washington was invited to speak, which brought a large number of people together. Just as Prof. Washington closed his speech, some one said, "Be quiet," and some one mistook it to be "fire," and it seemed that all the audience rushed to the door at once. The more we would say be quiet, the more they would rush. We began to sing, but it did no good. We did not know what to do. In a few minutes we heard some one say, "Some are dead," but I could not believe it; but then I rushed to the front door and I heard the cry of many people crying, "Lord, save me, save me;" and I heard the groans of many crying, "Help me, help me!" I rushed to the scene. I saw a man dead, and I heard a little girl saying, "Mamma, help me," but her mamma was dead, and the little girl was soon dead.

O, my friends, this was a night of pity and sorrow. Mothers screaming and children moaning for their lost ones. It was a sad time and there were many broken hearts. The Shiloh Church was in mourning. Everybody seemed to be sad, white and colored. The good whites of the city rendered all of the help they could in aid and money. There was about nine hundred dollars raised by the good white people to help the sufferers.

There were one hundred souls of th dead in the door within ten minutes—men, women and children. The church enrtance is ten feet wide. There are four stairways leading into the church to let th people in and out, but all of them seemed to rush to the front door. My reader, this was a sad night in the city of Birmingham.

I thank my God that it was as it was. We will never understand it, but God will undertsand it all; so we bow our heads to his will. Since the stampede, our congregation has fallen off, which leaves a great burden on a few good people, and we pray that God may help us to raise the balance due on the church, which is about $13,000. I pray that God will open the hearts of our Northern white friends to save our church, as there is a mortgage on it. The white people of the South have aided us with money for the brethren in the South and we kindly thank them for their hospitality and help in building this church. The building, 75x115 feet, cost $45,000. The congregation has paid it all in three years but $13,000. The total number of dead and injured from the effect of the stampede is 118.

I trust that all who read this may be edified. As a race we are trying to do all we can to build up in this way. We are building good churches and good schools, and in this way we are to help our people to have pride and self-confidence. The good white people of the South have helped the colored people in many ways, and we are very grateful for all the things they have done for this our race.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF REV. T. W. WALKER.

To the People of the Day:

I have often sat and meditated on my life, and have arrived at the conclusion that it was my duty to leave a synopsis of it.

I was born a slave and served thirteen years as such. I remember the dark and trying days of my people, and indeed those days of bondage will ever remain printed upon my memory.

On the fifteenth day of September, 1852, in Coosa county, my parents, Rev. Emanuel and Charlotte Harris, were owned by Benjamin Harris. In 1860 the whole family were sold as cattle would be sold to the highest bidder I well remember when placed upon the block with my trousers rolled up—what fun it was to me then; but, gentle reader, I was not able to comprehend the misery which was to follow. I have seen the white people tie my poor old father to a tree and apply the lash most inhumanly and I asked the sainted old gentleman what that meant, and his answer was, "My son, the lash will soon fall upon you." From thence I will tell you young people that I saw mothers sold from their children, husbands from their wives, and families separated here and there. Think when your poor old fathers and mothers were thus sold as cattle, whipped morning and evening. Think seriously, you who have so many golden opportunities to make noble ornaments of a God-read people; think, I say, of what your pastor and friends underwent. We prayed, in our humble and simple way, to the great and merciful God of the universe, and as a result I, as well as others, have lived to see proven the efficacy of fervent prayer. He came and broke asunder those shackles. May God bless the graves where repose those sainted old Christians. You should always let them live in your memory.

In 1865 a glorious shout went through the land. I thank God it ascended to his throne in one mighty voice. Oh, when I recall what our foreparents underwent for us it makes me quiver! What will become of you young people? Are you making use of the advantages you possess and of which I and others were bereft?

On the twenty-second of November, 1866, my father was summoned to his long rest, leaving mother with four little children and no one to help her in providing for them. Many a day we had nowhere to stay and nowhere to go. But God saw us and reached out the Hand of protection to the widow and orphan and gave us bread and a shelter.

In 1867 my mother united with the First Baptist Church of Wetumpka, Ala., and was baptized by Rev. Ned Adkins, and old slavery minister of the gospel. He was a good and pious Christian man and an honor to the church of his day.

It was then I began seeking Christ. I desired to be a good man. I worked hard for about three years for what we could eat. God kept his all-seeing eye upon me during the entire time. In 1869 I commenced to attend Sunday school—the nursery where religion is taught. Rev. S. Jones was in charge of the work. This was in Elmore county, and at that time church edifices were not as numerous among our people as at the present era. We were meeting in the woods and had to contend with the cruel and unchristian bushwhacking element of the whites. With all these difficulties our prayers ascended to God, and you, young people of the Race are now enjoying the results of the suffering and hardship of the low, meek, humble and oppressed.

It was in the year of 1870 that I moved to Montgomery county, where I attended Sunday school regularly at the old Elam Baptist Church. There was an old brother by the name of Rev. S. Colton, with the "blue back" speller. On every Lord's day he would read the third chapter of St. John.

Oh, my dear young friends, I give you this little glossary of my life to assist you to rise to a higher standing, spiritually as well as temporally, and to be men and women equal to those of any race.

In that dear old church above referred to I found some blessed and faithful workers. Rev. C. Cole was the pastor in charge at that time. Rev. William Ware, a noble divine, was a well read man of that day. Other grand old men of that blessed old church were Deacons Curtis Woods, Allen Chambers and Charles Cole. Well might I say that these were deacons after the Bible—plain, sober and faithful men, abounding in the love of God and with the gifts of the Holy Ghost. It was there in that old church, and by the example of these old Christian men, that I said: "If God could have such as these coming right from under a dark cloud, I would make myself a man." I then accepted the superintendency of the Sunday school, which was in 1878, and there I began to build myself up.

My outlook was indeed anything but encouraging. A poor boy with no earthly being to help me. I wanted to attend school, but the lack of means prevented me. Without help I had no way of gaining admittance to the school room. About this time Holland Thompson visited old Elam Sunday School and spoke of one Robert Rakes, a great Sunday school worker, telling how he made himself a great man with no one to help him save the Lord of Lords.

I had entered upon my seventeenth year before I knew A from B. I had been a slave for thirteen years. In the meantime I had spent only three days in school and it gave me a relish for study. Many were the long, dreary nights I sat with tears in my eyes because I had no one to help me; but these sweet and soul-inspiring words would come to me: "I will guide you in all truth; trust in me." Oh, how I love God's Word. It is good to have his Word with you—it's a light unto your pathway.

In 1878 I was the acting superintendent of Elam Sunday school, when Dr. C. O. Boothe made us a visit—it was a glorious visit. I was trying to teach the Bible class. The doctor found out I was not a Christian, when he asked me how could I be a teacher and know not God. I was a fool. The lesson was from Isaiah 9:6, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." From that day I began to be a better man.

On the third Sunday in May, 1879, I united myself with the Elam Baptist Church and was baptized by Rev. Jerry Cole, better known as "Jerry Hendricks," the father of Rev. H. Hendricks, that noble young man who fell asleep in Jesus a few days ago in the same pulpit where his father stood for nearly twenty years. At this time his son, Moses Hendricks, filled the same pulpit. I cannot forget that blessed old place! May it be called blessed unto the Lord!

In my confusion I felt that I was called to go out into the vineyard and tell of the Saviour who died an ignominious death on Calvary for all mankind. I felt as if I were unworthy to mention the name of Jesus, as I had no one to instruct and help me, and with no school training. Ah, what a predicament I was in—with not even a Bible or a hymn-book. Can you not see the way was very dark and discouraging for me? But those words of consolation from the 28th chapter of Matthew, 19th and 20th verses, "Go," and "I am with you alway," gave me courage and I cried unto the Lord to help me. God answered my prayer and He will answer yours. The lines of this beautiful old hymn often came to my thoughts and added strength to my troubled mind—

"How can I sink with such a prop
As my eternal God,
Who bears earth's huge pillars up
And spreads the heavens abroad."

The encouragement and will eventually came and I entered upon the work of my Master feeling that the Lord was with me,

and would strengthen and help me. Oh, what an opportunity the young man of to-day has, with schools on every hilltop, and numerous theological seminaries, all under the management of competent teachers and professors. God has abundantly blessed us among all the races of the earth, and may the Great God of the Universe assist the young people of to-day, men and women of the true kind. We, as a race, need you. You have all the advantages necessary to become useful instruments in promoting the happiness and prosperity of the race. Now grasp the golden opportunity.

After arriving at the conclusion that God had called me to preach, I gave myself to him to be used as an humble instrument in His hands as He might desire, and in the name of Jesus I entered upon the work.

On the 24th day of December, 1880, I was married by D.r. McCarthy, in Columbus, Georgia, to Miss Martha Moore, a faithful woman as a minister's wife; a Christian woman, endowed by Nature with all those grand and noble qualities which so adorn true womanhood. God permitted us to live together six years, four months and four days, when he claimed this sainted woman as his own.

In 1881, I came to Birmingham, a stranger in a strange land. My wife and myself joined the First Baptist Church, which was then under the pastorate of Rev. A. C. Jackson.

I then felt more and more convinced that I had been called to preach the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I could not rest at night. I was in an unknown dilemma the whole time, surrounded by an atmosphere of doubt and suspense until God removed every obstacle from my path and made my duty clear, and since then I have tried to the utmost of my humble ability to lead a Christian life and faithfully attend the work of God.

When I spoke to my pastor of my desire to consecrate my life to God he kindly allowed me to speak in his church. I was not licensed at this time, and in February, 1881, Brethren M. G. Kendrick, Eli Parker, John Jones, Arthur Brown and a few faithful sisters began a little prayer meeting in Hillman's Quarters, where we assembled for about six months and gathered in quite a crowd, when we made application to organize the Second Baptist Church. In its organization we called Rev. S. Jones, of Wetumpka, to set us up, as no church in Jefferson county would do the work for us. I then had received my license.

Rev. S. Jones was called as the first pastor of this little Christian band. We had our ups and downs, our bitters and our sweets, but the Lord was with us and crowned our efforts with success, and as a result of our labors in the Hillman Quarters you have the Second Baptist Church and Shiloh Church.

It was in the Second Baptist Church, of Birmingham, Alabama, in 1882, I was licensed to preach the Gospel of Christ by Rev. S. Jones. Shortly afterward I was called to take charge of the church and accepted, trusting in the Lord for strength and wisdom to do His work. In a short time after assuming charge I saw the church was entirely too small to accommodate the congregation, and began to tear down the little structure preparatory to erecting a more commodious house of worship. A revival was begun and God blessed our labors with eighteen converts, thereby adding new life to the cause. I took courage and trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ, laboring hard to earn an honest living and serving many of you, dear readers, as your pastor. It was indeed an irksome undertaking, though I placed my trust and dependence in God's Word where He says, "He who suffers with me shall live with me." I then fully decided to persevere in the Master's work, and with brighter hopes and faith strengthened I pressed onward in the work to which I believed I had been called.

In 1883 Sixth Avenue Church, as it is familiarly known, became dissatisfied with me, and every effort on my part failing to harmonize the discordant element, I decided to resign the pastorate, and the church called Rev. S. M. Reeves, of Greenville, Ala., who accepted and remained in charge for about five months.

On the twelfth of August of the same year I was recalled as pastor the second time. With many misgivings as to the future I accepted the call. Feeling that my task would be a hard one, I went to the Lord and in humility and sincerity prayed for divine guidance and assistance in the great work before me.

On the fifteenth of September I began a revival, which was blessed with forty-one converts, naturally infusing new spiritual life into the church and clearly demonstrating to my mind that God was with me and had answered my prayers, and that I had been called to the ministry.

For three years after I began to preach I had grave doubts as to whether I had been called to the work. I truly felt that God wanted me to do something, but could not understand it, so I went to him in prayer, and continued to plead until my soul was fully satisfied that I had chosen the right vocation. My devoted wife, always so hopeful, would ever bid me be of good cheer, telling me that God was surely with me and would bless my work and in His own good time would crown my efforts with success. How true were her predictions the good I have accomplished by his help fully tested. God bless her as she now sleeps the sleep of a Christian in the quietude of Oak Hill Cemetery.

In 1884 I was ordained by Revs. W. R. Pettiford, J. R. Capers and A. C. Jackson. Then it seemed that all the world was upon me, but I felt that the Lord was with me. At this time the house of worship was only 18x30 feet in dimensions and a membership

of 160, with a debt of $500 due on the lot upon which the little church was erected. With a determination to succeed we struggled on and paid the indebtedness on the lot. We soon found the church was too small for the increasing congregation, and under the leadership of the writer the work of tearing down the old structure was commenced. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we began the erection of a new house of worship, 36x60, where we remained for about three years, when it was again apparent that more room was needed; in 1887 this building was moved to the lower corner of the lot, and was used as a hall after the completion of the present church. This magnificent temple, 54x80 feet, stands as a monument to the perseverance of your humble servant, as also to his Christian wife, who now sweetly reposes in the arms of Jesus. This woman was indeed a power as a preacher's wife and a helpmate in its fullest sense.

On the fourth day of May, 1887, the Master called her from labor to reward—to live with him. It was my loss but Heaven's gain. What a happy life was ours during those few short years in which we were permitted to live as one. I had some sad, sad hours in my Christian work, but she was one who encouraged me and buoyed me up in those hours of sadness. Whenever darkness and sorrow pervaded my heart she brought light and joy. She answered the Master's call and left me in trouble.

I remember one day when she worked on the new church, handing up brick to the mason. I said to her, "Wife, don't do that." She answered, "I must work while I live, for I will soon be gone where I cannot help you in this work. I know I will not live to see you finish this church, but you must be faithful." She was sick at that time, but would creep out, look at the church and drop a tear. God bless her dust until he bids it rise on that great morn when we shall meet to part no more. The last sad rites were performed by Rev. J. Q. A. Wilhite, the beloved pastor of Sixth Avenue Baptist Church.

With the divine assistance of the Lord, I was enabled, after the death of my wife, to nearly complete the church, and in 1899 I invited the Baptist State Convention to meet with my church, after which several of the brethren made compacts to get me out. So the Satanic work began, and there was no more peace for me at the Sixth Avenue Church. I believe firmly, it was God's will that it should have been as it was. He had something better for me, but I could not see it at that time. God always knows what is best for his people.

In those perplexing and trying times I had a few friends, and well I remembered the words of God's Book, "Go," and "I will be with you alway until the consummation of the world." I trusted Him and found those words true so far.

On the 15th of September, 1887, I married again, and have lived nearly ten years with my second wife. We have spent some sweet days as well as some bitter ones together, though the longer we live together the brighter the days are. We have more joy now than when we began life, and the end will be sweet. "The Lord is my light." "In thy light shall we see light." So God was my Leader in darkness and brought me through. Having had sorrow in my heart daily in those sad hours, these words of the Psalmist come to me: "Thou hast smitten all mine enemies on the cheek bone; whom shall I fear?"

At this time I was called to take charge of the First Baptist Church of Bessemer, Ala., which I accepted. I spent some time in prayer over it, and upon assuming the pastorate I found quite a number of Christian brethren and sisters, who manifested much love for me and were willing to do all in their power to assist me as their spiritual guide. I remained in charge for six months, when I had to leave them and return to Birmingham. It did not seem to be the Almighty's will that I should leave Bessemer; yet I did not know what to do, as the people of Birmingham would not give me up.

That God-blessed man, Dr. C. O. Booth, met me in my troubles, and as we talked the matter over he said to me: "Brother Walker, God has a purpose in everything He does, and God only knows what is in this thing; but you must be led by the Spirit. Pray often on your knees, and God will bring everything to pass in His own time." Oh how this good man helped me, whom all had left to die. God sent him to strengthen and encourage me. God bless him to save fallen young men. I feel in saving me he saved a nation.

I then gave up the church at Bessemer and returned to Birmingham. This was in 1891. Penniless, with no charge, and with only a few friends. Yet I trusted in the Lord, from whom I received aid.

I called the people together and we rented a small storehouse, corner 19th Street and Avenue G, where we remained one month. We soon had to move out, and commenced planning for a rally. I procured a tent and on the 24th day of April I preached under it and raised $185. So you who read this little work can see that God was with me. On the last Sunday of the month I collected $125. I felt greatly encouraged to proceed with the work, and was thoroughly satisfied that it was the will of the Lord. It seemed to me at this time that day light was again breaking; the light of God was shining in my pathway. Oh, what a blessed consolation there is in God's Holy Word.

I now feel that I have tried to do something for Christ. My efforts may be read in history when I am dead.

I have organized and point with pride to the following socie-

ties: The Christian Relief, it being about thirteen years old; The Children's Mission Band, in its ninth year of usefulness; The Afro-American Benevolent Association, with a membership of six hundred which has been a great blessing to the people since its organization. I mention these not to gain personal notoriety, but to let you young people see that you can make yourselves useful in this life. Get up now at this acceptable and needful time and make an effort to do, for our path is hedged in by a line which marks the limit of the Devil's power, and says, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

Let us all be on the alert and do something in this life. Let us make a mark as a race. The race is not given to the swift, neither the battle to the strong, but it is given unto those who hold out unto the end. Our path may lie through the enemy's land and the mountains at times may seem inseperable and insurmountable, as if our passage was mysteriously opposed by some unseen power; but we must trust in God and go forward, remembering that there is a prepared way for God's children: "Every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places made plain." Isaiah 40:4. The enemy, my dear reader, may annoy us, but he can never destroy.

Paul tells us that all Scripture is given by inspiration from God and is profitable for doctrine. God's Book has been my schoolmaster. It has led me through dark places. Young man and young woman, if you desire to be strengthened spiritually read the Bible night and day. It will teach you how to lead a life of usefulness. Without this blessed Book we would all be in darkness. I repeat, read that good Book, gentle reader, and read of great and pious men, and remember that God created them as he did you, and be resolved to follow in their footsteps and emulate their example, and God will bless your efforts to serve him and your fellow-man and your reward will be great. Yes, my dear young friends, strive to be like those pious men and women of old who are now within the pearly gates enjoying the companionship of the blessed. Never rest in this life until you have done something for the Master. Disdain and shun bad company, for "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Think of the many mothers who lie uneasy in their graves from broken hearts, caused by wayward children. Stop and hear the reader when he implores you to turn unto the things of heaven and forsake the things of earth. Hearken unto and heed the advice given you by your dear, devoted mother—she is your earthly guide, whose duty, it is to prepare you for the life immortal. Trust to her, confide everthing in her, and her mother's heart will beat only for you—to her your interests will be paramount to all else. By so honoring and loving her you will be obeying the scriptural injunction, "Honor thy father and mother," and God will make good

His promise; your days will be long in the land and God's blessing will follow you through this life and to the life eternal.

To the young married people I will say: That you should not enter into the holy state unadvisedly, neither from an impure motive. Ask God's help and guidance in selecting your helpmate. You must remember, that when you take the marriage vow, you must thereafter bear with one another in adversity as well as prosperity.

Young man, you must not take any advantage of your wife simply because God ordains it that you are the head. Treat each other kindly, cleave to each other, and bear in mind, "That whosoever God has joined together, let no man put asunder."

Think of Tan Fuller, who was a slave. He was the wonder of the world, because he studied those things which make him a useful man to his race.

In reading the lives of great men it inspired me to make the best of life I could, so God has helped me to where I am. The Bible teaches us to first seek the kingdom of God—those things of the earth will come in due time. "God is a lamp unto our pathway and a light unto our feet." God will always shine a light in the Christian's pathway, if we trust Him. He has helped me in life. What I am God has made me, because I could do naught without Him.

If you do not hold yourself up in a manly and useful way you may never expect to be anything in this life. We need to be Christian men and women—not hypocrites—then our lives will not be a failure.

The Negro has performed the laborious work of this country. He fought in the bloody rebellion to help break asunder the bonds of slavery He has made the white man wealthy. Now let us unite and throw the tide of prosperity and wealth to our own beloved, though despised, race.

I shall now close my autobiography by giving you the number of candidates whom I have initiated as followers of Christ, viz:

Sixth Avenue Baptist Church.....631
Shiloh Baptist Church 285

Total 916

Trusting that the perusal of this little work may not have been without profit to the reader, and wishing you all God's choicest blessings, I remain

Your friend and brother in Christ,

REV. T. W. WALKER,

Founder and Pastor Shiloh Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala.

FIRE
DEP'T.
BIRMINGHAM, ALA.
MAY 1902

STATEMENT OF FIRE DEPARTMENT.

We, the Fire Department of the city of Birmingham, Ala., extend our heartfelt sympathy for the National Baptist Convention, the Shiloh Baptist Church, and relatives and friends of the dead and injured who so unfortunately met with the sad accident of the catastrophe in our city, September 19, 1902.

If it had been possible for us to have prevented the disaster, we would have been the happier to have done so. But we are sorry to acknowledge that the unfortunate circumstances were entirely beyond the control of human power. We were merely instruments in the hands of One greater than man. We therefore could only perform such duties as were allotted to us in the capacity of firemen. Doing all that we could for immediate relief of the unfortunate, we used our best judgment, as we always believe is best for all concerned in the event of fire and calamity. Trusting that we rendered efficient service on that sad occasion, we offer the same assurance of our good faith in the performance of future duties.

POLICE DEPARTMENT.
DECEMBER 190

STATEMENT OF POLICE DEPARTMENT.

We, the police of the city of Birmingham, believing that every precaution was taken to prevent any possible damage to life and property, and that every possible good was done for the alleviation of the suffering who so unfortunately met with serious injury on that eventful night, and that the dead were properly cared for and buried with all due ceremonial rites of religious burial, we can but express our sympathy for the bereaved relations and friends of the dead and injured, and the National Baptist Convention, and for Shiloh Baptist Church, which in all probability must sustain some injury in the results, we extend our guarantee in good faith for the protection of all in the future with such power as we may have within the jurisdiction of police protection.

WHERE THE DEAD WERE LAID FOR IDENTIFICATION. (See page 57.)

WHERE THE DEAD WERE LAID OUT FOR IDENTIFICATION.

A scene looking across from the front of Shiloh Baptist Church by the northeast corner to a vacant lot adjourning the church property on the east, and Mr. Reid's florist garden on the west, having a row of young shade trees running south, parallel with the church edifice, and separated from the church property by a fence which was broken down on the night of the catastrophe.

The shade in the scene marks the place where the dead were laid for identification, side by side in a row in the vacant lot under the trees, parallel with the church.

The dark surface is the shade of the row of trees which stand in line parallel with the east side of the church.

The vacant lot is a space of about 40x115 feet between the Shiloh Baptist Church edifice and Mr. Reid's florist garden. The fence, which in the picture is dilapidated, was in good condition before the stampede occurred, but was broken down on that eventful night by excited people, who wildly sought refuge, and by others who crowded hastily about the premises in search of missing friends and relatives.

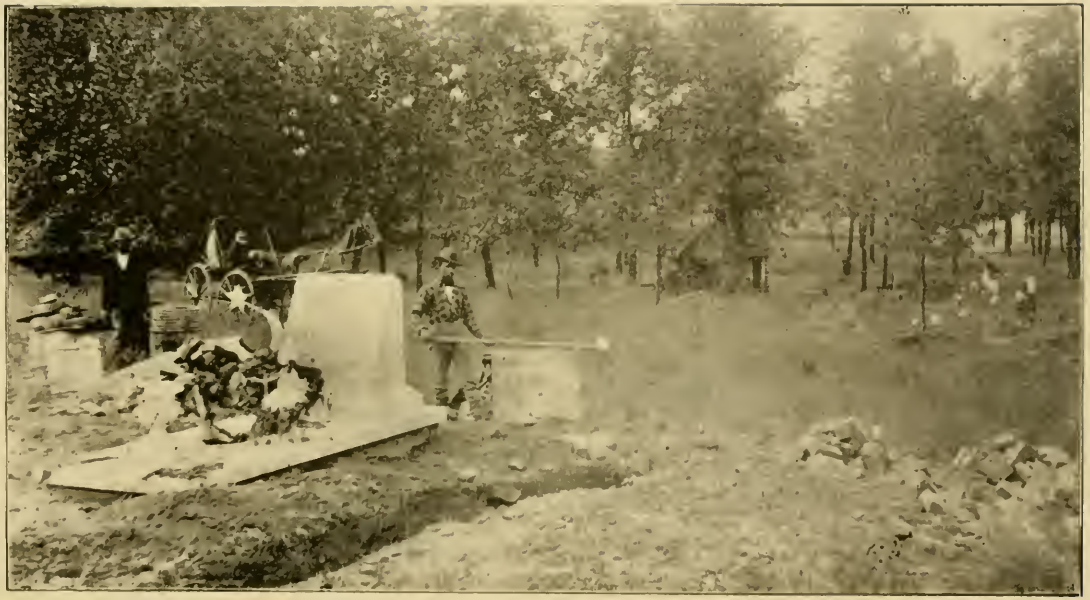
The line of the shade marks the place where the dead were laid for identification, the feet of the dead were toward the church as they lay side by side with their heads toward the florist's garden: lanterns and the constant lighting of matches were the means of light which was reflected on the faces of the dead that they might be known.

Lamenting husbands, bewailing wives, weeping friends and sympathizing visitors were thronging about the dead and dying with matches and lanterns in hand, calling pitifully, "Where is my wife?" "Where is my husband?" "Where is my child?" "Where is my mamma?" "Where is papa?" "Where is brother?" "Where is sister?" "Where is my friend?" while their only answers were distressful groans of the dying and lamentation and weeping of the living.

Every possible medical aid was secured and many were survived and lived, but the chilly hands of the Pale Monster of Death had touched more than one hundred mortal bodies which fell under the blow and lay conquered victims of an unexpected visit of the Prince of Darkness, who defied the skill of physicians, and laughed at medical science. His victims were dead and laid out for identification.

THE FIRST COMPANY TO THE RESCUE OF THE
UNFORTUNATES IN BIRMINGHAM, SEPT. 19. 1902

A Chemical Tower of Birmingham Fire Department.



REV. R. H. WALKER VISITS WHERE THE DEAD WERE BURIED AND MEDITATES OVER THEIR GRAVES.

(See Page 61.)

REV. R. H. WALKER VISITS WHERE THE DEAD WERE BURIED AND MEDITATES OVER THEIR GRAVES.

The two men, one with a hoe in his hands and the other standing between two barrels, are janitors of the cemetery, and are arranging to permanently beautify the decorated grave of Dr. A. L. Hill, whose body lies buried in his grave designated by the marble tombstone.

The cemetery presents a gloomy cast of mortal doom, loneliness and desertion. The very veil of death hangs over the vicinity like a canopy enclosing its confines to the limit of sorrow and distress. Clusters of graves here and there, some with uplifted tombstones, some marked with grave end-boards, some designated by red earth, shaped in grave fashion, some flat with withering grass and weeds on top of them, fading with the change of autumn season, and some open to receive the recent dead, which on to-morrow will be swallowed up in the last narrow confinement of human respect, are certain reasons for solemn reflection over the text, "If a man dies shall he live again?"

Philosophy teaches that material never ceases to be material, although by natural changes of conditions of materials they seem to pass away; but they still remain materials. By cessation of material life material death ensues, which naturally reduces by decomposition the object within its grasp, but material death cannot remove from existence the material of which an object or body is composed.

The truths which crown the facts relative to the philosophy of material life and material death, also philosophically and scripturally express the doctrine of the spiritual life and spiritual death. If a man dies a material death, the material of which he was made still exists. If a man dies a spiritual death the spiritual composition still exists as the material does, in a separated condition. As material death decomposes material bodies and reduces by decomposition human flesh and bones after the separation of the soul from the body, so does spiritual death reduce spiritual vigor and happiness to dissenting disgracefulness in eternal anguish, confusion, pain, ruin and dissemination, without any hope of redemption after the separation of the soul from the favor of God

by His final divine denunciation of the wicked, viz.: "Depart from me, ye cursed! I never knew you."

The log cabin in the midst of the trees is the janitor's tool house which may be used also as a shelter in the time of storm. It is crumbling with age, although it is a trusty type of the slave's home of thirty-six years ago. Even now, hundreds of huts of its class are still used for dwelling houses for Negroes, and in some instances for Caucasians or white people in many of the rural vicinities of the Southern States.

The light shade under the trees that may be seen by looking over the group of white tombstones beyond the log cabin is the main entrance to the cemetery. The main drive is marked by a smooth-looking terrace through the thicket back of the log cabin from the light shade under the trees over the group of white tombstones to the back of the buggy in the scene. A roadbed however, is built through the cemetery, leading from beyond the white tombstones across the cemetery, but is not visible in this scene.

The black line marking the terrace in the background through the thicket, is the boundary of a cut through which a railroad passes, the tracks of which may be seen slightly in the distance through the light shade of the main entrance.

The rubbish looking piles of brick and barrels by Dr. A. L. Hill's grave and in front of the janitor who has the hoe in his hands, are material with which work is being done to beautify the grave of Dr. Hill's remains.

The light shade over the tops of the trees towards the main entrance indicates the direction towards the city of Birmingham, which is situated in Jones Valley. Trolley cars run within one mile of the cemetery. The driveway to the cemetery from the city is well built and pleasant. The rubber tire, easy-running top buggy and the horse, a proud, pet, thoroughbred nag, is the handsome private turnout of the owner of the leading livery stable in Birmingham. It was said by the owner of the horse, and commonly reported, that this was the first time that the horse was ever let to a colored man. As a compliment to the editor, the proprietor added, "I let my pet to that gentleman because I am impressed with him on sight that he is no common man, and is far above the average Negro." This is a compliment in the South that one may justly feel proud to receive, especially when he is an uncompromising antagonist to all of the unjust Southern policies. That tells us that an honorable position taken by honest convictions and intelligently and bravely defended, commands more respect than hatred even in the South.

Notwithstanding the hopes and prospects for a prosperous future one may have by encouraging business anticipations as he looks at the beautiful landscape scenery presented by the pano-

rama of Jones Valley and the surrounding lofty mountains, in whose bowels lie hidden riches of untold millions of dollars in coal and iron; it is difficult to take a considerate view of the Woodlawn Cemetery after the burial of the unfortunate dead of the Shiloh Church, Birmingham, catastrophe without entertaining a thought of the futurity of man through death and judgment to the eternal city. Any degree of meditation solemnly reproduces the interrogation, probably with even a deeper sense of appreciation for divine power and divine knowlegde. At the same time, with words unuttered, the heart and soul ask each other: "If a man dies, shall he live again?"

This has been one of the troubles which have always troubled mankind. The answer, however, is full of evidences in the affirmative. In consideration of universal acknowledgment of the established principles of Christianity and the assurance which Christ gave by his death and resurrection with the language that all power of heaven and of earth is entrusted in my hands, and afterwards advised his followers that he would go and prepare a place for his believers, that where He would be they could be also, and then in presence of witnesses ascended, being lifted up in a cloud, leaving his holy influences by grateful memory and sending the Comforter, as he said he would do, unfold to all the world the unmistakable "Yes!" Yes, he who dies in Christ shall live again with Christ! He who dies at peace with God shall live in the kingdom of God! He who dies with a regenerated heart has assurance of life beyond the grave in a home of joy and happiness. He who dies with the hope of eternal glory has the promise of eternal life. The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

When taking the last broad glance over the lonesome graveyard and turning from the silent dead in a solemn seriousness of thought of the living, revived only by faith in the promises of Christ, the word "Farewell" resounds the funeral knell. Yes, farewell, my departed friends! Good-bye! God bless you! I'll meet you in the city of the New Jerusalem, where friends have gone long ago.

> **I'll meet you in the city of the New Jerusalem,**
> **Where we shall part no more.**

For when a man dies he lives again.

Rev. R. H. Walker, Jr., Visits the Graveyard and Writes Five Verses to the Dead.

DEAD IN CHRIST.

BY THE EDITOR—HIS POETICAL REFLECTIONS ON HIS VISIT TO THE GRAVEYARD AFTER THE CATASTROPHE.

Though we die, we live again,
A life beyond the grave,
Where no grief, no death, no pain,
Nor human needs to crave.

In that life there's rest and peace—
A life of happiness,
Where we'll live and never cease
To reign in righteousness.

Sleep on, mortal dead in Christ!
In vict'ry you shall rise;
Christ, who made the sacrifice,
Has wiped your weeping eyes.

He has built a home on high,
A home of heavenly rest,
Where His saints no more shall die,
Nor cease to be His guest.

He has plucked the sting of death;
He conquered, now He reigns;
And He calls, O earth, to earth
I'll raise up your remains.

NAMES OF THE DEAD WHO WERE KILLED IN THE CATASTROPHE AT SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH, IN BIRMINGHAM, ALA., FRIDAY NIGHT, SEPTEMBER 19, 1902.

It was quite uncertain about whether or no many of the killed were married or single; hence the names which have no title proper.

NAMES OF KILLED.

Rosedale, Ala., a town two miles south of Birmingham, across Red Mountain, bordering on its southern slope:

Mrs. Lula Thompson, Miss Sallie Lloyd, daughter of Mrs Lula Thompson.

Avondale, Ala., a surburb in southern city limits of Birmingham, Ala.

NAMES OF THE DEAD THAT LIVED IN BIRMINGHAM.

FEMALES.

Minnie Norton, Mary Worthington, Miss Sallie Starks, Miss Harriet Starks, Miss Maud Ruffins, Nora Ziegle, Effa Meadow, Mrs. Sarah George, Jennie Adams, Lena ———, Miss Ida King, Miss Florence Cole, Addie Ayers, Annie Parker, Lula Eskew, Miss Alice Jones, Louisa Jaceson, Mary Nearing, Ella Foster, Fannie Henton, Miss Mary Collins, Nianna Brown, Mrs. Lowe, Olivia Williams, Estella Bailey, Miss Pearl King, Ida Walker, Mrs. Lou ———, Addie Weaver, Mary Smith, Carry Jenkins, Edna Gardner, Miss Elsie Simms, Miss Mable Patterson, Katie Allen, Millie Dodson, Annah Edwards, Mrs. Pruet, Mrs. H. T. Thomas, Stella Barny, Amanda Walker, Mrs. Annah Woodcliff, Mrs. Monrovia Norton, Susan Williams.

MALES.

Willie Goodger, Joe Edwards, Mr. Wade, E. K. Fondiville, Mr. Gibbs, Frank Calhoun, Dr. A. S. Hill, Dentist, Robert Smith, John Foster, Gabe Robertson, J. Collins (brother to M. Collins), S. O. Turner, Richard Clabourner, Bob Harris, Jno. Edwards, Joe Malone, P. K. Smith, Westley Linsey, Carl Wagner, Jack Clark, Sam Coleman, A. L. Epps, Mr. Floyd, Sam Marret, Mr. Robt. Buchanon, Elbert Henry, Nick Victory, Rev. Jas. Kelly, Rev. A. J. Roanoke, Moses Jordan, James Robertson, Joe Robertson.

L. of C.

SURVIVED THE DEATH PIT.

MRS. ANNIE BRADFORD, 270 63RD STREET, WOODLAWN, ALA., ESCAPED ALIVE, HAS RECOVERED AND TESTIFIES.

I was at the church that dreadful night. I was in the gallery. The house was so crowded that I thought I would go out before the crowd blocked the door. I said to Mrs. Clark, my company, who was also dreadfully mashed, Come, let us go; it is so warm in here, and these people are going to crowd the door after a while. Mrs. Clark consented to go and we started out.

Prof. Washington's speech was grand, but I could not wait until it was finished, although he was about getting to his closing time. We had reached the bottom of the gallery stairs before the crowd began to pack us up. We moved on, however; and reached the lower part of the upper thirteen steps which led to the vestibule. We were about the third step above the portico which is on top of the outside thirteen steps. All of a sudden a rush came and knocked us down. People were ahead of us and fell as we fell.

We helped to form a second layer of fallen people as we piled up with, it seemed, hundreds piled upon us. It was utterly impossible to move or get out. Our heads were out because we were so low down and so near the outside corner of the brick walk, and only one layer of people under us. I was lying fastened down tight on a little thin woman and a big fat man. The woman laid quite still—I don't know whether she was dead or not; the man kept trying to get out but he couldn't. Women and men were scrambling, it seemed, in death over me. I noticed the police pull a dead woman from on top of me. The man I was lying on asked for a drink of water. A man brought the water and gave it to him, and gave me some, too. I think the water saved both of us. I was so hot that it seemed that I would burn up.

After they got the people pulled off the upper part of the pile, and got down to me, I was lifted out by some men. They carried me across the street and one of them, a delegate, sat down and laid my head across his bosom and called for water for me, at the same time he kept saying, "These people here are crazy, just letting our folks die for the want of water." He called to some women to come and take me in charge after he saw that I would live. He went to get another one. I don't know who he was;

I have not seen him since. I never heard any alarm of fight or fire, although I notice the papers give an account of such alarms.

I was carried home and laid in bed, unable to be up, about a week. I was dreadfully mashed about my limbs and thought I would not get over it, but the doctor cheered me up and assured me that no bones were broken. I think that the dying screams and groans of those that fell on top of me and further up the steps did me more harm than the fall or mash did. My company, Mrs. Clark, was badly injured. I am afraid she will never fully recover.

The dying people over me nearly pulled my hair out. They would scream and groan and catch hold of anything they could get their hands on, and pull for life.

I asked a man who was trying to rescue us to put my hair up for me. The man did the best he could uttering a few words of sympathy. I saw that our sympathizers were doing all they could for us. I, therefore, waited patiently for my turn to be rescued. They tell me that I was packed down there one-half an hour, but it seemed much longer to me. I never want such experiences any more.

WHAT THE NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION THINKS OF THE CATASTROPHE.

REPORT AS TO ACCIDENT.

The following statement was read from the committee:

"We, your committee, appointed to consider the matter of Friday evening's disaster at the Shiloh Baptist Church of Birmingham, Ala., which resulted in the death and injury of many precious lives, report the following:

"The excitement that took place on the choir platform was caused by an altercation between two individuals over a seat, and the Convention as a body disclaims any responsibility for the same.

"The statement that there is a defect in the architecture of the church is misleading, and should be corrected by stating that the workmanship and plan is in every sense modern and perfect.

"We also recommend that the pastors of the various churches of Birmingham be appointed as a committee to take in hand the collections to be taken from time to time during this meeting and all outside contributions for the benefit of the dead and injured.

"The gratitude of this Convention is hereby expressed to the citizens of Birmingham irrespective of race for their speedy assistance in releasing the suffering and dying on the night of the disaster and to all others who have offered pecuniary aid.

"We extend our sympathy to Pastor Walker, since this calamity occurred in his church.

"The sympathy of this Convention is hereby extended to the suffering and bereaved, commending them to the will of the Great Head of the Church who doeth all things well.

W. G. Johnson, Chairman; L. L. Campbell, J. L. Dart.

Done by order of the Convention: E. C. Morris, President; W. L. Cansler, Secretary.

EWC
AUG. 16 1921.

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